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ABSTRACT

This lecture discusses the higher education of blacks in the United States. The first part describes historically the development of black higher education by chronological periods up to approximately 1965. The second section discusses the present era in terms of several major current issues. Some of the social, legal, and political aspects of race relations generally that have formed the larger context within which higher education for blacks has developed are sketched. A short personal appraisal of what the entire experience of black higher education seems to add up to is included. (Author/MJM)

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The Higher Education of Blacks in the United States

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The Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé Memorial Lecture

A lecture entitled the Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé Memorial Lecture (in memory of Professor R. F. Alfred Hoernlé, President of the South African Institute of Race Relations from 1934 to 1943, and his wife, Winifred Hoernlé, President of the Institute from 1948 to 1950, and again from 1953 to 1954), is delivered under the auspices of the Institute. Invitations to deliver the lecture are extended to people having special knowledge and experience of racial problems in Africa and elsewhere.

It is hoped that the Hoernlé Memorial Lecture provides a platform for constructive and helpful contributions to thought and action. While the lecturers are entirely free to express their own views, which may not be those of the Institute as expressed in its formal decisions, it is hoped that lecturers will be guided by the Institute's declaration of policy that "scientific study and research must be allied with the fullest recognition of the human reactions to changing racial situations; that respectful regard must be paid to the traditions and usages of various national, racial and tribal groups which comprise the population; and that due account must be taken of opposing views earnestly held."

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Prof. A. S. Mathews, *Freedom and State Security in the South African Plural Society*
Prof. Philip Mayer, *Urban Africans and the Bantustans*

The Higher Education of Blacks in the United States

Introduction

I am conscious of the honor and responsibility implicit in being asked to give the Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé Memorial Lecture for 1973. The humane values the Hoernlés stood for have never been more needed than today, not only here in South Africa but in many parts of the world, including my own country, the United States.

I have chosen as my topic the experience of black Americans with higher education, or, perhaps one should say, the American experience with the higher education of blacks. This subject is, of course, only one aspect of race relations in the United States, but in our country it is a key one. Whether inferences can be drawn from our experience which have any relevance to South Africa is not for me to judge. Certainly I shall attempt no such judgment. Although the interpretive views I will express tonight are my own, I would like to acknowledge the substantial and invaluable assistance I have had in preparing this paper from Professor Charles Lyons of Teachers College, Columbia University.

In this lecture I will use the words black and Negro interchangeably. During the course of American history blacks have been called by many names, most of them disrespectful. The respectful terms which survive today are Colored, Negro and black. Colored, however, is very old-fashioned now and Negro is becoming that way. Neither term appeals to young blacks. They prefer the word black because it is direct and says in effect that it is as good to be black as to be white, or, as the current phrase goes, "black is beautiful." Whites are beginning to use the term also, I believe with a sense of relief. There are, of course, many Americans, white as well as black, who are in fact of racially mixed ancestry. Both by previous law, however, and by custom persons clearly known to be of such ancestry have never been considered either white or members of a specially designated racial group, as in South Africa. However light skinned they may be, they are considered and consider themselves to be Negro. Indeed, in today's era of black pride quite a number of blacks who in previous times might have tried to pass as white, now proudly declare themselves black. Of 206 million Americans today, some 23 million, or about 11 percent, classify themselves as black.

In addition to blacks, there are three other principal minority groups in the United States which are in the public eye today as being disadvantaged—Mexican-Americans, or Chicanos, as they are now generally called, Puerto Ricans, and American Indians. Although these groups

face many of the same problems as blacks and have many of the same needs, their situation is basically quite different and they will not, therefore, be included in this paper.

Higher education for blacks takes place today in three kinds of institutions—in colleges and universities which once primarily or exclusively enrolled only whites but have now been desegregated, in colleges and universities which were established specially for Negroes and, historically, with a few exceptions, have principally served that race, and finally in colleges and universities founded in recent years on a fully integrated basis. Within each set there are institutions under both private and public control.

In the American system, higher education is that education which follows immediately after completion of high school, at the age of 17 or 18. It can be of two years' duration and lead to an associate in arts degree, or of four years' duration and lead to a bachelor's degree. It can include as well, post-baccalaureate study which may lead, after varying additional years of study, to a master's or to a doctor's degree, or to a qualification in a profession such as medicine, law, or theology. The term *college* today refers exclusively to higher education. In the nineteenth century, however, many colleges, including most of those established for Negroes, were really of secondary level and were colleges in name only. Nonetheless, I will include them in this paper, using as my definition of higher education the highest level of education to which blacks as a group could aspire at any given time.

The general thesis of this paper will be that, throughout the history of the United States, but especially since the emancipation of the slaves in 1863, there has been constant tension within our society over the issue of whether segregation or integration of the races should be the basis for our national development, and this tension explains much of what has happened in regard to the higher education of blacks. Until recently this issue was largely settled, *de jure* in the South and *de facto* elsewhere, by the enforced segregation of the black minority by the white majority. Beginning in the 1930's, however, and accelerating as time went on, the legal basis of segregation was progressively destroyed by the courts and by legislation, and great progress has been made since then toward realization of the full and equal rights of citizenship for blacks. It is true the goal of a fully integrated society remains elusive and is probably far off. On the one hand, white racism remains persistent and pervasive; on the other, the powerful economic, social and psychological legacies of centuries of oppression continue to place blacks in a disadvantageous competitive position. Nonetheless, having tried segregation and found conclusively that it did not work, we are now committed to the course of integration, thus far with results that are considerably more promsing.

Throughout the century or so since emancipation, education, and particularly the higher education of blacks, has been regarded by most Americans, black and white, as the key to black progress in every realm. Although voices have arisen recently which seem to challenge this assumption, there is no convincing evidence available to indicate that it does not remain valid. Indeed, there is much evidence which suggests that it is the education of black leadership, more than any other factor, which has been the critical element in the gains made by blacks. This is not for a moment to suggest that education alone can bring about absolute equality or total integration. It is to say that education is a *sine qua non* of progress toward those goals.

A further issue, and one that has, in one form or another, produced much of the controversy in American life in recent years, is whether any education, either of blacks or whites, can be education of high quality for today's world if it is conducted on a racially separated basis, either deliberately or inadvertently. Within elementary and secondary education this question has given rise to the spurious issue of busing. Within higher education it has caused consternation over the self-imposed isolation of blacks on white campuses and sharp debate about the future of the colleges and universities established specially for Negroes. These issues will be discussed later in this paper.

A further introductory point has to do with the capacity of a white person truly to understand the black experience of higher education. Some black Americans would doubt that capacity and resent any such undertaking as this lecture by a white. The education of blacks, however, is an issue that affects, and must be of concern to, all Americans. Many blacks, furthermore, realize that if the black community is ever to achieve the respect it deserves, whites must be encouraged to learn about the black experience in our national development and understand it as best they can from the black point of view. This paper is one such effort.

Finally, the lecture will be divided into two major sections. The first will describe historically the development of black higher education by chronological periods, up to a point about eight years ago. The second will discuss the present era in terms of several major current issues. As I go along, I will attempt to sketch in some of the social, legal and political aspects of race relations generally which have formed the larger context within which higher education for blacks has developed. I will close, perhaps rashly, with a short personal appraisal of what the entire experience of black higher education seems to add up to.

Historical Development

1619 to 1863

It may surprise you to learn that the first black Americans came to America before the Pilgrims, who, as you will know, arrived on the "Mayflower" in 1620. In 1619 a Dutch ship landed at Jamestown, Virginia, and sold twenty "Negars" as the historical accounts referred to them, to the English colonists. Although the notion of chattel slavery was initially alien to the English mind, the colonists quickly adjusted to the concept. Beginning in the 1660's, the various American colonies enacted laws which recognized the legality of enslaving the black African and his descendants. The number of slaves held was fairly small until the end of the seventeenth century.

During the eighteenth century, however, the number of slaves imported into America, and particularly into the South, increased rapidly. This was largely because of the development of the plantation system. As Southern planters began to grow tobacco and then, more importantly, cotton, their demand for labor increased at an insatiable rate. By 1790, when the United States had its first census, there were some 628,000 black slaves in the country. In addition, there were some 60,000 free blacks, making a total of 688,000 or nearly one black to four whites in the total population of just under four million. By 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, there were about four million black slaves and half a million free blacks in a total population of about 31 million, a ratio of about one black to six whites in the population.

Slavery, it must be noted, was fundamentally an institution of the Southern states. Consequently, most blacks were to be found in the South until recent times, a fact that has had a profound effect on our history. And yet the ownership of slaves was by no means universal among Southern whites. Indeed, in 1860, less than one quarter of Southern families were slave owners. Why, then, were Southerners, non-slave owners as well as slave owners, eager to have the Southern states secede from the Union, even at the cost of a disastrous and tragic war to preserve the institution of slavery?

The explanation can be found in part in the dominance of the economic, political and intellectual life of the South exercised by a few powerful slave-owning families, and the dependence of all Southern citi-

zens on the fruits of the plantation system. As important, however, was the development of white racism, which saw in slavery the means of keeping the races apart. Whether deep-rooted prejudice against blacks developed as a result of the social and economic conditions of slavery or was of earlier origin is not clear. Some historians claim that the English language itself, with its identity of "white" with the good and pure, and "black" with its connotations of evil and debasement, conditioned the way whites perceived the black man. They cite Biblical tradition, with its references to the legend of Ham and the curse of Canaan, and European folklore, with its reference to "black devils," "black knights," and "foul Aethiops," as contributing to the prejudice of the European toward the black African. In short, the colonists are seen as having brought with them from Europe a legacy of superstitious beliefs and linguistic traps which preconditioned them to think of the black man as inferior, beast-like, sinful, cursed—indeed, a natural slave.[1]

The legal institutions surrounding slavery were geared to maintain this separation of the races and the preservation of white control. Enshrined in the so-called "Black Codes,"[2] enacted in the slave states during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the statutory restrictions on blacks were essentially similar in each state. In effect, they asserted that slaves were not persons but property and guaranteed the rights of owners over this property. The Black Codes also contained provisions aimed at safeguarding the white population against black uprisings. Fears of such uprisings were not baseless. Blacks could and did engineer minor and major uprisings against the white community which kept them in bondage. Interestingly, much of the early legislation affecting the education of blacks is contained in the Black Codes. In every Southern state these codes had statutes which forbade the schooling of black slaves. Education was thought to give the slave too high an opinion of himself and access to such pernicious ideas as those expressed in our Declaration of Independence, namely, that all men are created equal and have certain inalienable rights. In short, education was dangerous. Nevertheless, some slaves and some whites, at great personal risk, defied these harsh laws and engaged in clandestine learning and teaching, but the sum total of education for slaves was, all the same, meager.

As has been noted, however, not all blacks were slaves. By 1860 there were 488,000 free blacks, 44 percent living in the South Atlantic states, 46 percent in the North and 10 percent in the South Central and

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[1]See Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), Chapters I and II.

[2]See John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1967, Third edition), pp. 187-190.

Western states. There were several ways by which blacks became free. In the North one state after another had legally abolished slavery around 1800, thus freeing many thousands of blacks. Others received their freedom through manumission—being legally released from bondage by their owners. So frequent did this practice become that, during the first decades of the nineteenth century, several Southern states passed legislation curtailing the practice. A third, less frequent, way was for blacks to buy their freedom from their masters. Finally, many thousands of slaves simply ran away, traveling north by the so-called "Underground Railroad" to some community where Abolitionist sentiment was strong and haven could be found, or, better still, all the way to Canada where the fugitive slave laws could not follow them.

Free blacks in America prior to 1860, however, were free only in a relative sense. In the South their ability to travel without hindrance was greatly restricted, there were a number of occupations they could not enter, and by 1835, after a systematic wave of disenfranchisement, they could not vote. Even in the North their right to vote was limited, and both in the South and the North they were subjected to segregated schooling. Even in Boston, the very home of Abolitionist sentiment, there were separate schools for blacks. In 1849, in a legal test of segregated schooling, a court there, using an argument that would become the basis of the nation's law by the end of the century, held that the rights of a black child were not violated in being sent to a separate school, since that school was equal in every way to other schools in the city. Some efforts were made in the private sphere to provide good education for black children, but these were frequently subject to public harassment and even mob violence. For example, in Washington, D.C., in the 1850's, Alexander Hays, an emancipated slave, with the help of prominent religious leaders and two British teachers, set up a school system for blacks. However, their schools were systematically burned to the ground and, in 1858, Hays and his followers had to flee the city.

Despite these difficulties, some free blacks did obtain a fair amount of schooling, and a very few even went on to higher education. For the latter, some went abroad to England or Scotland, some attended white institutions in America, and, after 1850, a few began to study at colleges established especially for blacks. Black graduates of American colleges were few and far between, however, and totaled only 28 by 1860. The first ones were John Brown Russworm of Bowdoin, and Edward Jones, of Amherst, both of whom received their degrees in 1826. Only a few colleges made a regular practice of admitting black students, notably Oberlin in Ohio and Berea in Kentucky, institutions noted for their Abolitionist sympathies.

Many of the free blacks who gained higher education prior to 1860

did so under the auspices of the American Colonization Society. This Society, which was founded in 1817, believed that free blacks could not be integrated into white American society. It argued that the difference between the races was so severe the only alternative was to send free blacks back to Africa to a colony the Society had founded in Liberia in 1822. Some 12,000 free blacks were sent there prior to the Civil War. As it was necessary to have teachers, civil servants, doctors, lawyers and clergymen for the Colony, the Society sponsored free blacks to attend predominantly white institutions in the United States prior to service in Liberia. Although not all of these individuals went there or, if they did, stayed, enough did to provide the Colony, and later, after 1847, the Republic of Liberia, with its leadership elite.

Three embryonic colleges established specially for free blacks date from the years prior to 1860. The earliest, founded in 1839 as a secondary vocational school under Quaker auspices, is now Cheyney State College in Pennsylvania. The other two, although hardly more than secondary schools in their early days, were nevertheless chartered to grant degrees, and thus can be said to be the first of the Negro colleges. These were Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, sponsored by the Presbyterian Church, and Wilberforce University in Ohio, sponsored by the Methodist Episcopal Church, and founded respectively in 1854 and 1856. It is noteworthy that all three of these institutions, all founded before the Civil War, were in the Northern states of Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Looking back at the long period from 1619 to 1860, one's overriding impression is how little educational opportunity was made available to black Americans—none for slaves, and not much for free blacks and that of poor quality. Nonetheless, a few blacks, by virtue of extraordinary perseverence, did manage to obtain a good education and reach positions of leadership, and a few white philanthropists and church people did make serious efforts to provide educational opportunity to blacks. At the least, a start was made on the two forms of higher education for blacks which were to grow slowly in the balance of the nineteenth century and burgeon in the twentieth—the separate college for Negroes and attendance by blacks at predominately white colleges and universities.

1863 to 1896

In 1863, in the middle of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves. This was quickly followed by the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution, which, respectively, outlawed slavery forever, made citizens of the ex-slaves, extended to them the right to vote, and guaranteed them equal protection of the laws. Immediately after the end of the Civil

War, the victorious Northern states set about "reconstructing" the Southern states, not only economically but also politically and socially. To many Northerners the War had been fought not only to hold the nation together but to free the black man and bring him into the mainstream of American social and political life. Consequently, the North attempted to impose upon the South a legal and political order designed to achieve that objective. This effort, known as the Reconstruction, lasted for only 12 years, from 1865 to 1877.

The integration of the black man into American society, as it was envisaged during the Reconstruction, turned out to be more of an ideal than a practical reality, even when backed by the power of military force. The South was bitter in defeat and resistant to integration, and the behavior of the Northern army of occupation was such that it commanded little respect. Some Negroes, it is true, were elected to public office, but they lacked the political power necessary to institute policies that would bring about permanent improvement in the position of their race. The Reconstruction, indeed, was characterized by ugly racial strife. It witnessed the founding of the Ku Klux Klan, the burning of the houses of blacks, lynchings and mob violence.

Then, in 1877, as his part of a cynical political deal which had gained him the United States Presidency, Rutherford Hayes withdrew the last Federal troops from the South. After that the Federal Government followed a policy of non-interference in Southern affairs, of recognizing, if not condoning, the Southern white point of view in matters of race. The Southern black, with Federal protection removed, had no alternative but to accommodate to the dictates of white dominated Southern society. Life became steadily more repressive and harsh for him as an elaborate system of enforced segregation based on state law was gradually put in place.

Understandably, the development of higher education for blacks during the Reconstruction and its aftermath was conditioned by the military, political and social developments I have just described. Indeed, the history of higher education for blacks in the latter part of the nineteenth century is mainly a chapter in Southern history. Most blacks were, after all, in the South—92 percent at the time of the Civil War and 90 percent as late as 1890. Black higher education in the South was, however, almost entirely a product of Northern initiative. The Civil War, by many Northerners, was seen as a noble crusade to free and improve the black man. It was only natural therefore that following the war this sense of idealism would lead a number of Northerners to go to the South as missionaries to educate those who had been liberated. The Federal Government similarly felt a compunction to do something about the welfare of the ex-slave and for this purpose set up the Freedmen's Bureau in

1865 under the leadership of General O. O. Howard. The missionaries and the Bureau cooperated closely in their work, the former turning to higher education as the latter gradually established a system of primary schools for Negroes throughout the South.

Four Northern church groups—Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists— were initially responsible for the establishment of private higher educational institutions for Negroes in the South, soon to be joined by black denominations such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Many institutions were founded that did not survive; and despite the word "college" or "university" in their names, virtually all during their initial years were in fact at best secondary schools. Nevertheless, at least seven institutions for Negroes did have genuine collegiate departments as early as 1872, and these began to turn out a small though steady stream of graduates. It has been estimated that by 1895 there had been more than eleven hundred graduates of the Negro colleges, most of whom entered teaching, the ministry, or other professions to serve their own people. Among today's most distinguished colleges and universities primarily for Negroes, several date from the immediate post-Civil War years. These include: Atlanta University, in Atlanta, Georgia, the foundations of which were laid in 1865 by representatives of the American Baptist Mission Society; Howard University in Washington, D.C., chartered in 1868 by Congregationalists but aided financially throughout most of its history by the Federal Government; Fisk University in Nashville, established in 1866 by the American Missionary Association; Hampton Institute in Virginia, founded by a representative of the Freedmen's Bureau, General Armstrong, and opened in 1868; and Meharry Medical College, founded originally as Walton College, in 1865, by the Methodist Episcopal Church.

It was during the period from 1865 to 1890 also that a number of institutions were founded that were later to constitute part of the public sector of black higher education. Most of these institutions started life as industrial or normal (that is, teacher training) schools. About half of the publicly controlled colleges for blacks which survive today resulted, however, from an Act of the U.S. Congress in 1890. In the Morrill Act of 1862 the Congress of the United States had provided grants of federally owned land to endow a system of public colleges in all of the states. In 1890, in the so-called Second Morrill Act, it permitted the establishment and maintenance of separate land-grant colleges for white and black students, provided the funds available were divided equitably between them. The result was the founding or planning between 1890 and 1899 of a Negro land-grant college in each of the Southern states and in the border states as well—17 in all—in addition to the white land-grant colleges

already in existence. Despite the wording of the Second Morrill Act, the Negro institutions did not, until very recent times, receive anything like an equitable share of funding.

Aside from attendance at one of the new Negro colleges, opportunity for blacks to obtain a higher education during this period was extremely limited. During Reconstruction a handful attended white Southern institutions, but this soon became illegal. A few hundred blacks attended Northern predominantly white colleges, of whom about two hundred are estimated to have graduated in the 30-year span from 1865 to 1895. However, 75 of these graduated from a single college, Oberlin, suggesting that the effort made by the many other Northern private and public colleges and universities of the day was hardly impressive.

It was in these years also that what might be called the first phase of Northern organized philanthropy began to make its presence felt in the South. In 1867 George P. Peabody set up a special Fund for the Advancement of Negro Education in the South. Most of this Fund's efforts were aimed at improving primary and secondary education for Negroes, but some grants went to the support of teacher training at the Negro colleges. The Fund continued in operation until 1914 when its assets were turned over to the Slater Fund. The Slater Fund was founded in 1882. Its principal efforts went to the support of industrial, or craft, training for Negroes, especially at Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes. In 1937 it was merged with another well-known philanthropy, the Jeanes Fund, to form the Southern Education Foundation. Other important philanthropic funds were established in the early years of the twentieth century to aid Negro higher education. The largest, the General Education Board, set up by John D. Rockefeller in 1902, gave some $63 million for the education of blacks before going out of business in 1964, most of this sum going for the support of higher education. The Phelps-Stokes Fund, founded in 1910, is best known for its sponsorship of two prominent surveys of Negro colleges, conducted in 1915-16 and 1928. The Julius Rosenwald Fund, which operated from 1917 to 1948, gave large sums for scholarships, endowments and current budgetary support at several Negro colleges. Although, as we shall see, this first phase of Northern organized philanthropy had its controversial aspects, it was, in conjunction with the philanthropic efforts of the Northern churches, vitally important to the development of private Negro higher education in the South.

1896 to 1933

The year 1896 was an extremely important one in the history of American race relations. It was the year in which the United States Supreme Court in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case confirmed the constitutional

validity of the "separate but equal" doctrine, a doctrine which the Court was not finally to overturn until 1954. The issue at stake in this case was whether an 1890 Louisiana statute requiring "persons of color" to ride in separate railway cars violated the constitutional principle that ensures equal protection of the law. The Court found that it did not. The object of the law, it reasoned, is to ensure legal equality, not social equality. The law cannot be used to put blacks on the same plane socially as whites, it said. Established usages, customs, and traditions of the people involved must be considered, as well as preservation of the peace. Provided that the facilities available for use by either race are equal in quality, then separate facilities do not violate the equal protection clause of the Constitution.

Thus, the mischievous doctrine of "separate but equal" gained sanction from our highest court and gave constitutional authority to a host of Southern state statutes providing for separation of the races in virtually every sphere of life—"Jim Crow" legislation as it came to be known, Jim Crow being a slang term for the black man. The facilities provided for blacks, in public transport, in medical care, in education, or any other area, were seldom anything like equal. The Supreme Court had erected a superficially plausible doctrine which allowed a cynical South to "keep the black man in his place" and a North, which was at best naive and at worst hypocritical, to salve any qualms of conscience it might have as to the fair treatment of blacks under the laws.

To circumvent the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution which protected black voting rights and which *Plessy v. Ferguson* had not overturned, a variety of means were used by the Southern and border states: poll taxes, complicated balloting procedures, literacy tests, and "grandfather clauses," clauses which required for suffrage proof that one's grandfather had voted—impossible, of course, for most blacks, whose grandfathers had been disenfranchised slaves.

Given the strong feelings of Southern whites on the subject of race, the field was wide open for such agrarian populist demagogues as "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, Governor of South Carolina, and James Vardaman, Governor of Mississippi, to play on racial prejudice for their own political ends. Indeed, this has been the standard strategy of many candidates for political office in the South until very recently—until blacks regained the franchise. The whirlwind reaped by this sowing of the wind by racial demagogues, however, was the most virulent spate of "Negrophobia" that has ever engulfed the United States. Beginning in the 1890's and diminishing only slightly by the time of the First World War, the country was flooded with such tracts as Charles Carroll's *Negro a Beast* (1900) and Thomas Dixon's *The Clansman* (1905). The latter,

which was in 1915 to become the basis of D.W. Griffith's famous motion picture, *Birth of a Nation*, described the black man in these inflammatory terms, "half child, half animal, the sport of impulse, whim and conceit . . . a being left to his own will, roams at night and sleeps in the day, whose speech knows no words of love, whose passions, once aroused, are as the fury of the tiger."[3]

This kind of vilification was, however, not entirely the product of demagogue. It also represented the popular fruits of a long line of allegedly scientific, but in fact worthless, investigation and speculation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries having to do with the respective mental capacities of whites and blacks based on such things as measurement of cranial capacity, shape of the skull, facial angle and so forth. This nonsense, unfortunately reinforced by some of the writings of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, gave rise to the view that Negroes were in a less advanced evolutionary position than whites and were, therefore, mentally inferior. The residue of belief in this bogus theory of racial inferiority is to some degree still to be found in America and makes understandable the justifiable sensitivity of blacks in regard to current research on alleged genetically based differences in intelligence between the races. The white scholars who are engaged in this work or who discuss it in their writings have, in my view, been extremely insensitive to the feelings of blacks. Their findings, furthermore, have gained little or no support among responsible scientists qualified to judge the worth of this kind of work.

In any event, for the several reasons suggested, the South in the latter years of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth embarked on a course of action which instituted a rigid caste system. It was Gunnar Myrdal who pointed out in *The American Dilemma* that the social system of the South was not really a matter of relations between the races or of relations between social classes but a system of caste. In view of the considerable degree of racial mixture in the South, the term *race* could hardly be used in a scientific sense of either whites or blacks. Similarly, although there were different classes within both black and white society, the term *class* is inapplicable with regard to relations between black and white in that it implies some possibility of individual or group mobility between the black and white societies, which was out of the question in the segregated South. The notion of caste, then, is the most accurate description of the South's social system during this period. It was an inflexible system which, except among small children, prohibited

[3]Thomas Dixon, *The Clansman* (1905), as quoted in George M. Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-America Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 280-81.

absolutely any social mixing of black and white or any social mobility of blacks across the caste line.

Understandably, the development of a rigid caste system in the South profoundly affected the development of higher education for blacks. They were denied admission to white colleges and universities; as the result of the Second Morrill Act they were relegated to a separate system of federally aided land-grant colleges; and because of inferior education in segregated elementary and secondary schools, they entered higher education woefully ill prepared. Most important for the development of higher education for blacks, however, is the fact that there emerged during the heyday of the Southern caste system a philosophy of education for the Negro which challenged the very idea that blacks should receive a higher education comparable to that given to whites.

This philosophy of education, embodied in the so-called industrial education experiment, was predicated on the belief that what the black man needed was not a liberal arts or classical education but training in the simpler crafts and trades that would equip him for his place in society. This philosophy came to be embraced by Southern whites, Northern philanthropists, and even some Southern blacks. It resulted in diminished support for those Negro colleges which offered a liberal education and generous support for the industrial institutions.

Industrial education was first introduced into the South in the 1860's by agents of the Federal Government and representatives of the missionary societies. It got off to a strong start with the opening in 1868 of Hampton Institute by General Samuel Chapman Armstrong. From the outset Armstrong rejected the notion of a traditional literary education for blacks in favor of instruction in agriculture and simple crafts. His most successful student was the former slave, Booker T. Washington, who, in 1881, founded Tuskegee Institute which was closely patterned after Hampton. Washington rapidly became the key spokesman for the industrial education movement in the South and it spread rapidly.

The central theme in Washington's philosophy was that through patient acquisition of the virtues of thrift and industry blacks would eventually achieve their constitutional rights. He did not believe they were forever to remain in a subordinate position, but he believed that their progress toward equality would necessarily be slow. He frequently decried the type of education offered by the Negro liberal arts colleges, which he felt unfitted the student for the kind of labor necessary to establish a firm economic foundation for the progress of the race. He never tired of telling tales about black families which had pianos in their unkempt houses, or black youths who studied French grammar while their family fields went unattended.

Washington's most famous speech was one he gave at the Atlanta Exposition of 1895. "It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top," he proclaimed. "No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. . . ." "The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly."[4] And so on. This speech was quickly dubbed "the Atlanta Compromise" by those who saw in it an acceptance of an educational philosophy which complemented the Southern caste system.

Underlying the rhetoric of the movement was the fact that black industrial education was to be less a force for social and economic improvement for blacks and more an instrument designed to perpetuate the racial caste system. In other parts of the country industrial education was used to prepare workers for responsible positions in a modernizing economy; in the South it was perverted into training blacks in pre-industrial skills—simple crafts, gardening, and so on—which were not of much worth in an industrial economy. It trained blacks to remain in the rural areas as farm laborers and semi-skilled workers; it aimed at keeping them in their traditional role; it kept them from achieving any sort of mobility in a modern economy. In short, industrial education for blacks in the South became simply the pedagogical expression of racial repression.

The amount of money devoted to industrial education by Northern philanthropists was considerable. The Peabody, Slater and Phelps-Stokes Funds and the General Education Board all supported the movement heavily; Andrew Carnegie, after hearing Booker T. Washington speak, became an enthusiastic convert and gave generously both to Tuskegee and to Washington personally. In a letter to the trustees of Tuskegee in 1903 informing them of his gift of $600,000 to the Institute, the income from a portion of which was to be for the personal use of Washington and his wife, Mr. Carnegie wrote:

> To me he [Washington] seems one of the greatest of living men because his work is unique. The Modern Moses, who leads his race and lifts it, through Education, to even better and higher things than a land overflowing with milk & honey—History is to tell of two Washingtons—one white, the other black, both Fathers of their people.
>
> I am satisfied that the serious race problem of the South is to be solved wisely only through Mr. Washington's policy of Education—which he seems to have been specially born—a slave among slaves—to establish and in his own day greatly to advance.[5]

[4]As reproduced in Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 155, 156, 158.

[5]Unpublished letter to William H. Baldwin, Jr., a trustee of Tuskegee Institute, from Andrew Carnegie, dated April 17, 1903. Archives of Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Meanwhile, many liberal arts colleges for Negroes had to close their doors for want of support. Others had to discontinue their training in the professions, such as medicine and law. Some of the liberal arts colleges felt obliged to establish manual training departments to attract philanthropic funds. I am afraid this wasn't the last time that the judgment of philanthropic bodies in regard to the higher education of blacks was to be found fallible. Today's generation of "philanthropoids" has made its share of mistakes too.

There were, of course, critics of the swing from liberal to industrial education. The most outstanding of these was undoubtedly W.E.B. DuBois. Born in Massachusetts in 1868 of a middle-class black family, he attended Fisk and Harvard, from which he received his Ph.D. in 1895. Shortly thereafter he joined the faculty of Atlanta University, one of the black liberal arts institutions so castigated by the advocates of industrial education. While there, where he taught until 1910, he formulated views of black education that offered a powerful challenge to Booker T. Washington. DuBois argued that only with a strong liberal arts education—one equal to that given to whites—could the American black hope to achieve social and economic parity. What the "new South" needed from the black community was not merely a laboring class but an intelligent black elite. DuBois' idea was to offer higher education to what he called "the talented tenth" of black youth, those who had demonstrated the most academic promise. Once educated, they, in turn, would be instrumental in opening up opportunities for blacks generally.

In 1900 DuBois felt he had evidence that such an elite was already in the process of being formed. In a paper entitled "The College Bred Negro" which he prepared in that year, he combined a sober assessment of the state of black collegiate education with an optimistic view of the future. He noted that a substantial proportion of the undergraduates at Negro colleges were inadequately prepared, but admission standards had been rising steadily, he felt, and would continue to rise. It was a bootstrap operation that would take time. He also noted that there were by then 2,500 black college graduates, about half employed as teachers, 17 percent as ministers, 6 percent as doctors and dentists, 5 percent as lawyers, and 3 or 4 percent as businessmen. It was this small black elite, he said, that would form the growing point for the production of the talented tenth. "The college-bred Negro," he wrote, "is, as he ought to be, the group leader, the man who sets the ideals of the community."[6]

DuBois, consequently, was highly critical of Booker T. Washington and complained vigorously about what he called the "Tuskegee Machine,"

[6]W.E.B. DuBois, *The College Bred Negro*, (1905), as cited in St. Claire Drake, "The Black University in the American Social Order," in *Daedalus*, the Journal of the American Academy Of Arts and Sciences (special issue on "The Future of the Black Colleges), Vol. 100, No. 3, Summer, 1971, pp. 838-839.

the powerful interlocking directorate of Washington, Northern philanthropists, and Southern whites who pressed for industrial education. For Washington to support industrial rather than liberal education was, he felt, a betrayal of the black race. As DuBois phrased it in his book, *Souls of Black Folk*, in 1903, places like Hampton and Tuskegee were really centers of "that underground and silent intrigue which is determined to perpetuate the American Negro as a docile peasant . . . ." Industrial education, he felt, simply trained blacks in the lessons of subordination; it was an education which curtailed rather than promoted the social and economic advance of the race. Booker T. Washington was guilty of nothing less than a "submission to prejudice" and had, DuBois went on, "practically accepted the alleged inferiority of the Negro" in his quest to accommodate himself to white demands.[7]

DuBois was particularly bitter toward a Welsh-born American named Thomas Jesse Jones who had taught at Hampton and was the author of a highly influential Federal Government report on black education published in 1917. This report, paid for by the Phelps-Stokes Fund, heaped praise on Hampton and Tuskegee and was critical of the liberal arts colleges, advising philanthropists not to give further support to most of them. To DuBois this was a "dangerous and in many respects unfortunate publication." He was particularly annoyed that, with the death of Washington in 1915, it was Jones, a white man, who took on himself the role of chief spokesman for black interests. "Are we going to consent," wrote DuBois in 1921, "to have our interests represented in the most important councils of the world—mission bodies, educational committees, in all activities of social uplift—by white men who speak for us, on the theory that we cannot speak for ourselves?"[8]

Indeed, DuBois' sentiments regarding the role of whites in black education were indicative of the thoughts of many black leaders. Despite the constraints of the Southern caste system, blacks sought to control the institutions which shaped their lives, and a key institution in which they tried to gain power was the black college.

Initially, since most of the Negro colleges were founded by whites, control of black higher education was almost entirely in the hands of whites. They monopolized boards of trustees, served as presidents and deans and held the more important professorships. Gradually, however, blacks began to claim and take over positions of authority so that by 1915 almost a third of the presidents of black colleges and over half

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[7]W.E.B. DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk* (1903) as quoted in August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1963 reo. 1966), pp. 199 and 201.

[8]W.E.B. DuBois, "Thomas Jesse Jones," *Crisis* (Journal of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), XXII October, 1921, p. 256.

of the faculty were black. Today, of the 105 public and private black institutions, not a single white president remains, the final one having resigned just a few months ago, and the faculty is overwhelmingly black. Boards of trustees, however, are still predominantly white.

1933 to 1965

If the era from 1877 to about 1933 was one in which segregation was the prevailing principle of American life, especially in the South, the period from 1933 to 1965 can be characterized as one in which the integrationist ideals of American society were once again revived. A number of factors contributed to this revival, the most important of which were a massive migration of black population out of the South and into the North and West, the rise of the black protest movement, and the launching of a sustained legal challenge to the doctrine of "separate but equal." The development of higher education for blacks was profoundly affected by these factors.

From the time of the nation's first census in 1790 to about 1910, the proportion of blacks living in the South remained fairly constant at around 90 percent. During and after the First World War, however, lured by jobs in Northern munitions plants and driven out of the South by the mechanization of cotton picking, blacks from the rural South began moving North in large numbers. By 1920 the proportion of blacks outside the South had risen to 15 percent, by 1930 to over 21 percent, by 1940 to 23 percent, by 1950 to 32 percent, by 1960 to 40 percent, and by 1970 to 47 percent. This migration produced profound changes in the nation's greatest cities. By 1970, the five largest cities in the United States, all outside the South, had substantial black populations. These were: New York, 21 percent black; Chicago, 33 percent; Los Angeles, 18 percent; Philadelphia, 34 percent; and Detroit, 44 percent. Moreover, Washington, D.C., the nation's capital, and its seventh largest city, was 71 percent black.

One immediate result of this shift in population was a dramatic rise in the number of blacks attending institutions of higher education outside of the South. Not affected by the strict color bar that confined them in the South to the Negro colleges, blacks began to enroll in both public and private colleges and universities in the North and West in increasing numbers.

The most important result of the northward migration, however, was that it transformed what was once "the Southern problem" into a national issue. As long as nearly all blacks lived in the South, Northerners and Westerners could put the issue of black freedom low on their list of

priorities. Once blacks began to move North and West in large numbers, however, the nation as a whole had to face squarely the question of prejudice and discrimination. It was quickly discovered that racial prejudice was not limited to the South. Though blacks in the North and West did not face the kind of legally enforced repression they did in the South, they encountered social prejudice and economic discrimination of enormous magnitude. The movement of blacks to the cities outside the South was accompanied by race riots, discrimination in housing, which caused the growth of black ghettos, in turn resulting in *de facto* segregated schooling for blacks, and prejudice in the job market. As a result of these factors, only the meanest and lowest paid forms of employment were available to most black migrants and their children.

Nonetheless, the great black exodus out of the South, despite the enormous problems it has produced, has proven to be a liberating force for blacks in American life because it set in motion a number of other forces—legal, social, economic, and political—which, especially in the last decade, have resulted in a transformation of the entire context of American race relations in every part of the country.

One of the most significant of these resultant forces was the development of the black protest movement and its organizations. In 1911, a group of blacks and whites concerned about protecting the interests of the new rural migrant Negro in an industrial urban environment, formed the National Urban League. Despite a chronic shortage of funding, this organization has accomplished a great deal over its history and is a strong and valuable agency today. Equally important has been another organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, founded in 1910. Among its several stated aims was the extremely important one of challenging the legal basis of segregation. To this end it set up the Legal Redress Committee, which in 1940 was incorporated as a separate tax-exempt organization called the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. If ever there was a convincing argument for the importance of having independent, private, non-profit organizations in a society, it can be found here. The achievements of this organization, operating with limited financial support and often in the face of severe public hostility, have become legendary.

Beginning in 1915 the Legal Redress Committee brought suit in the United States Supreme Court in order to contest such things as grandfather clauses, legislation affecting discrimination in housing, and the denial of the constitutional rights of blacks in criminal cases. Between 1940 and 1963 the Legal Defense Fund argued successfully 43 of the 47 cases it brought before the Supreme Court. However, it is in the field of education that the most impressive record of legal achievement is to be found. Indeed, it was a case involving segregation in education, *Brown v. Board of*

Education, in 1954, which finally led to the overturn of the "separate but equal" doctrine established by *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 and thereby invalidated the entire framework of legalized, or *de jure*, segregation. It is interesting that the legal challenges to segregated schooling were made initially in regard to higher education, and then moved on to the elementary and secondary levels. It is also interesting that while from 1933 to 1945 it was the "equal" aspect of "separate but equal" that was challenged, from 1945 to 1954 the battle changed to challenging the legal basis of "separate."

Between 1933 and 1954 there were a number of important cases which laid the groundwork for the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. Initially these had to do with facilities for the post-graduate education of blacks, because the Negro colleges at that time could offer no work at this level which could be regarded as equal to that available in white institutions. The most important of these early cases was the *Gaines* case in Missouri in 1938. In this case the State of Missouri claimed that it had provided equal educational opportunity to Lloyd Gaines, a black, by giving him a scholarship to attend law school in another state. Not so, said Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, speaking for the rest of the Court. It was the duty of the state to provide education for all its residents, and that provision must be within the state.

The *Gaines* decision had considerable impact on the expansion of higher educational opportunities for blacks in the Southern and border states. In the border state of West Virginia the practice of admitting blacks into its previously all-white state university became common. In other Southern and border states the preferred solution was to create separate black graduate and professional schools when pressed by court action. Missouri, for example, having lost the *Gaines* case, set up an all-black law school as part of its state university.

The creation of these duplicate separate facilities, however, proved unsatisfactory both to blacks and whites. Whites quickly became distressed at the huge cost involved. Blacks, on the other hand, were frequently disappointed at the quality of training provided in these separate institutions. It was then that the NAACP decided to begin to attack the notion of "separate," in "separate but equal," rather than the notion of "equal." The key case here was *Sweatt v. Painter*, in 1950, when the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, having forced the State of Texas to create a separate law school for blacks, then challenged the equalness of the legal education it provided. The Supreme Court ruled that the black student involved had been denied the equal protection of the law in being denied admission to the University of Texas Law School. It was not possible, declared Chief Justice Vinson, for the black law school to provide training equal to that of the well-known University of Texas Law School which had, in addition

to a strong faculty and effective administration, influential alumni and a national reputation.

A third key case was *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* in 1950. In this case the Supreme Court ruled that McLaurin, a candidate for a doctor's degree in education, had been denied the equal protection of the law in being required to use segregated facilities in attending the University of Oklahoma. This had been accomplished by having him sit in an anteroom adjoining the lecture hall, use a designated desk in the library, and take his meals separately from other students. The Court ruled that by segregating McLaurin the University hindered his effective pursuit of a graduate education. The intellectual exchange between students, it said, is an important part of education. "There is," the Court said, "a vast difference—a Constitutional difference—between restrictions imposed by the state which prohibit the intellectual co-mingling of students and the refusal of students to comingle where the state presents no such bar."[9] It thus articulated a new and fundamentally important position.

These court decisions of the late 1930's and 1940's signaled to blacks and whites alike that the Supreme Court would, in time, open to blacks all the white colleges and universities of the Southern and border states. Consequently, beginning in the late 1940's, several states, such as Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia, quietly began to accept blacks into their previously all-white state institutions of higher education. By 1952, only five states, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama and Mississippi, had no black students in the state universities. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund decided at this point to broaden its attention to the outlawing of legalized segregation at the elementary and secondary school level. To do this it brought suit in several different states and carried the cases up to the Supreme Court. As it happened, it was a Kansas case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, on which the Court chose to rule in 1954.

At issue in the Brown case was whether a state could segregate children in the public schools solely on the basis of race, even if the physical facilities and other tangible factors were equal. Thurgood Marshall, a black lawyer and now a Supreme Court justice himself, argued the case for the plaintiffs. I have always been proud of the fact that in preparing his case he used to good advantage Gunnar Myrdal's exhaustive 1944 study of the Negro in American life which had been initiated and financed by Carnegie Corporation. The unanimous decision of the Court was handed down on May 17, 1954. It held that there were intangible factors

[9] *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*, 339 U.S. 637: 70 S.Ct. 851; 96 L.Ed. 1149 (1950).

involved in the separation of children by race. Segregation of black children has a detrimental effect on them in that it "generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way never likely to be undone . . . ." Therefore, the Court said, "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."[10]

One week after the *Brown* decision was announced, the Supreme Court let it be known in three related cases that its ban on segregation in public education would extend to higher education as well. And, in other decisions and court orders which came from the bench from 1954 on, the Court held that its principle that separate facilities are inherently unequal applied not only to education but a host of other services and facilities, ranging from transportation and public beaches to hospitals and lunch counters.

Of course, it was one thing for the Supreme Court to declare segregation unconstitutional and illegal and quite another to change overnight a system of discrimination and repression that had endured for over three centuries. Some Southerners accepted the new situation with good grace and set out to make it work. Others, however, including a number of public officials, fought the change with every strategem they could think of. Still other Southerners resorted to terrorism and violence. Blacks had been given new rights by the Court, but they still had to claim them in the face of a generally resistant and hostile white Southern population. The courage shown by literally thousands of black citizens, many just children, over the ensuing years after the *Brown* decision, was immense. Confrontations between local and state officials in the South and Federal authority were many, as blacks sought to integrate the schools and the deep South public universities. Three of these confrontations were particularly dramatic, one in Little Rock in which President Eisenhower had to call out Federal troops to integrate the schools, one at the University of Alabama when President Kennedy turned the tables on a defiant Governor George Wallace by federalizing the Alabama National Guard, which the Governor was using to try to prevent three black students from enrolling at the university, and one at the University of Mississippi where Federal marshals had to guard the first black student, James Meredith, day and night for a whole year.

The courage shown by these brave young black people who were willing to be the first to integrate has, however, paid off. Today there is not a single, previously all-white public college or university anywhere in the South which does not enroll black students. In most of these institu-

[10]*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* 347 U.S. 483; 74 S.Ct. 686 98 L.Ed. 873 (1954).

tions at least 5 percent of the student body is black, not a high percentage it is true, but a start all the same. Even the University of Mississippi, that symbol of white pride in a state which for so long stood as the bastion of white supremacy, now enrolls over 300 black students, who comprise 4 percent of its student body.

Nonetheless, significant as this start has been, the movement toward full integration has been too slow. In February of this year, therefore, in response to a suit initiated in 1970 by the Legal Defense Fund, Judge Pratt of the Federal District Court of the District of Columbia ordered the Federal Government to start proceedings to cut off Federal funds for higher education from ten states, nine of them in the South, where the court felt progress had not been satisfactory. The immediate result of this case, known as *Adam v. Richardson*, is that the affected states must submit plans to end all vestiges of their dual systems of black and white public colleges.

Although the battle to integrate the private sector of higher education in the South was somewhat affected by events in public higher education, the story there was essentially different. A few private institutions, with moral conviction or just sensing what was coming, began quietly to integrate their student bodies, especially at the graduate level, in the late 1950's. However, most of them held out until their hand was forced by the Federal Government in the mid-1960's.

In 1963 a vast march of over 200,000 people, black and white, converged on the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Its purpose was to remind the nation that exactly 100 years had passed since the Emancipation Proclamation and yet much discrimination and inequality still persisted in American life. This march was one of the events that helped to generate a wave of governmental actions in the civil rights field. In 1964, for example, the Constitution was amended to outlaw the poll tax in Federal elections. Payment of this tax as a prerequisite for voting had long been used as a device to keep blacks from exercising their right to the franchise. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 barred the poll tax in state elections, as well as providing other guarantees. The most important single piece of legislation, however, was the Civil Rights Act of 1964, an Act which could well be regarded as the crowning achievement of the administration of the late President Lyndon B. Johnson.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 bars discrimination in the use of public facilities and in employment wherever the Federal Government has authority to regulate such matters. A major provision of this Act states that any business firm, state, municipality, college or university which does contract work for or receives grants from the Federal Government is forbidden to practice any form of discrimination based upon distinction on the ground of race, color, sex, or national origin. Since the Federal Govern-

ment is a substantial contractor with industry and supplies a significant portion of the income of every state and virtually every municipality in the nation, the leverage in the Act to force integration has been enormous, not the least in colleges and universities, virtually all of which are dependent to some degree on Federal funds.

Specifically, to get Federal grants and contract funds, colleges and universities—private as well as public—have had to assure the Government that they do not practice discrimination in the hiring of faculty and other personnel, in the admission of students, in the granting of financial aid, in the assignment of dormitory space, in the use of dining halls and toilets—in short, in the entire operation of the enterprise. Moreover, compliance is not left simply to good faith but is subject to careful Federal monitoring.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and associated Presidential executive orders, have, it is true, raised a number of serious questions with which colleges and universities have had to grapple. There is, for example, the question of the true meaning of integration. What proportion of blacks and other minority group members must be hired as faculty and admitted as students before an institution can be called truly integrated? In order to achieve the right sort of racial and ethnic mix, should institutions of higher education establish quotas? If so, would this result in preferential treatment to minority group members and cause discrimination against members of the majority group as wrongful in its way as the discrimination against minorities the Civil Rights Act seeks to abolish?[11]

Some also question whether the Government, in its zeal to count and categorize, may, paradoxically, in fact be stressing the importance of minority group membership, just as it seeks to make such membership irrelevant. Should a college or university be put in the, perhaps, hypocritical position of categorizing its faculty and student body as black, white, Spanish surname, American Indian, and so on, to demonstrate that it pays no attention to racial or ethnic categories? More to the point, since colleges and universities must gather their data by asking faculty members and students to categorize themselves, should individuals in a society now officially committed to a policy which presupposes the irrelevance of racial and ethnic considerations, be asked to declare their racial or ethnic status?

Finally, there are a whole set of extraordinarily difficult questions which relate to a central dilemma of the traditionally Negro colleges. On the one hand, how integrated *must* these institutions become not to run afoul of the law for practicing segregation; on the other, how integrated *can* they become without losing the special character which enables

[11]The Supreme Court of the State of Washington has upheld the right of the University of Washington to grant preferential treatment to minorities in admissions to its law school.

them to meet the special needs of their constituency or without denying places to blacks for whom there is no alternative.

There are as yet no final answers to these questions. They have tended to be answered pragmatically on a case-by-case basis and probably not always entirely consistently. Nevertheless, whatever the problems created by the Civil Rights Act, there is absolutely no question that it has accomplished wonders in the integration of private, as well as public, higher education. There are few private colleges or universities in the South today that do not have at least token integration, and many Southern institutions are beginning to admit significant numbers of blacks. In other parts of the nation institutions which before the Civil Rights Act were theoretically integrated, but in fact admitted extremely few black students and had virtually no black faculty members, have made a vigorous effort to attract minority students in very substantial numbers and to hire as many qualified black faculty members as they can recruit.

Contemporary Issues

Participation of Blacks in Higher Education

As a prelude to a look at some contemporary issues, it may be useful to review briefly what has been accomplished in regard to the participation of blacks in higher education over our history. Up to the Civil War, as we have seen, only 28 Negroes had graduated from college; by 1900 this number had increased to about 2,500. Actual enrollment of blacks in that year was apparently about 700 to 800. By 1910 this enrollment was in the range of 3,000 to 4,000; in 1920, 6,000 to 8,000; in 1930, 20,000 to 25,000; in 1940, 45,000 to 50,000; in 1950, 95,000 to 105,000; in 1960, 195,000 to 205,000; and in 1970, 379,000. If one includes part-time students as well, then in 1970 black enrollment was 470,000, and today it is estimated by the Bureau of the Census to be still higher. In short, the general pattern in the twentieth century has been that full-time black student enrollment has approximately doubled every decade, and in the past few years full- and part-time enrollment has soared.

In part, this expansion simply reflects the general expansion of American higher education, which has grown from 238,000 full-time students in 1900 to over five million in 1970. More importantly, however, it reflects such factors as the demise of legalized segregation, the migration of Negroes out of the South, improved economic standards for black families, civil rights legislation, and the growth of a national commitment to right the wrong done by over 300 years of oppression of black Americans.

In many ways, much has been accomplished, but it is equally true that much remains to be done because blacks are still not participating in higher education at the rate that whites do in proportion to their numbers in the population. In 1900 only 0.3 percent of colleges and university undergraduate students were black. By 1970 this figure had climbed to nearly 7 percent of full-time undergraduates, but this still fell considerably short of the 11 percent which blacks represent in the general population and the slightly higher percentage they constitute of the college age population. When the 1972 Office of Civil Rights data is released, however, we will find that the current figure is higher than 7 percent.

When one looks at the rate, in 1970, of participation of blacks at each level of the four-year undergraduate course, a disturbing pattern emerges. In the freshman year, blacks represented 8.3 percent of total

enrollment; in the sophomore year, 6.8 percent; in the junior year, 5.4 percent; and in the senior year, less than 5 percent. This, of course, is partially attributable to an expanding annual entry of blacks into higher education and in part reflects the number of blacks now going to two-year community and junior colleges. However, it also reflects a high attrition rate.

Going farther up the ladder, one finds that in 1970 blacks constituted only 4.1 percent of the full-time enrollment in graduate and professional schools, including such vital fields as law and medicine. Although the past two or three years have seen some improvement in regard to black students reaching the highest levels of academic and professional training, there is clearly considerable progress still to be made in this area. On such progress will depend the ability of blacks ultimately to gain their fair share of the top-level positions in the administrative, business, professional life of the nation and the rewards thereof.

Turning now to the contemporary scene, there are a number of important issues, some quite new, which continue to make the subject of the higher education of blacks controversial. These issues can be conveniently grouped under two headings, the present condition and future destiny of the historically Negro colleges and the education of black students in traditionally white, or largely white, institutions.

The Black College Today

Ever since it became clear with the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 that the United States would no longer have a *de jure* dual education system, the future of the colleges established specially for Negroes has been a subject of debate. Initially, it was assumed by many whites that they were now anachronistic vestiges of an earlier age and should be allowed quietly to die. This view was further reinforced by the tendency of white observers to lump all of the Negro colleges together and make sweeping judgments about their poor academic quality. Naturally, attitudes such as these were deeply resented by those blacks who had devoted their careers to building up the Negro colleges, often working against formidable difficulties, such as inadequate funding, isolation from higher education at large, and local prejudice.

About 1965, however, attitudes began to change. In that year, a comprehensive and influential study of the Negro colleges by Earl McGrath, a former U.S. Commissioner of Education, recommended that, with some exceptions, these colleges be preserved and strengthened. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, in a report published in 1971, made the same recommendation. By this time there were fewer influential voices

recommending liquidation, although there did seem to be a movement in some of the Southern and border states not to end the life of their public black colleges, but to change their role from one of serving blacks to serving a fully integrated student body. Indeed, by that date, three of these public Negro colleges, in border states, already had a majority of white students. It was also clear that some of the financially weaker private colleges were going to have a hard time to survive.

The change of attitude toward the Negro colleges has come about, I believe, for several reasons. In part, it is simply that they have at long last begun to emerge from the remote isolation which for so long imprisoned them, and their strengths have become better known. It is now realized that there are some important ways in which these colleges can serve the black community that white institutions cannot duplicate. Traditionally, most white institutions have been geared to meeting the higher educational needs of reasonably well prepared middle-class white students. Most black colleges, on the other hand, have had the more difficult task of meeting the same needs of a less well prepared student body largely drawn from extremely low-income families. These two tasks are not the same. Furthermore, some young black people seem simply to be happier in institutions where the majority of other students are also black and they do not have to face the constant strain of being in a minority position. In ways such as these Negro colleges are coming to be recognized as part of a desirable diversity in American higher education.

There is also a practical reason for the change of attitude. Total enrollment in American colleges and universities, full- and part-time, doubled from over four to over eight million students, between 1960 and 1970. Forecasts show that numbers are likely to rise again substantially in the decade of the seventies but with much greater public resistance to the financing of expanded facilities. Overcrowding is therefore highly likely, and if the Negro colleges were closed up, where would places be found for the 170,0.. students they now enroll?

There ar.. existe.. today 105 colleges and universities founded specially for .. of which 85 are four-year institutions granting the bachelor's de.. 20 are two-year junior colleges. Of the 85 four-year c.. s, 35 ar.. ly supported and controlled and 50 are under private auspices. All b.. of these 85 institutions are located in 18 Southern and border st.. d the District of Columbia. Although these 85 today enroll only ab.. 42 percent of the black students attending degree-granting colle.. ughout the country, they grant 70 percent of the bachelor's .. ally earned by blacks, such is the attrition rate of black stu.. at white colleges. Two black universities, Atlanta and Howard, offer a fairly wide range of post-graduate and professional studies

and grant the doctor's degree. There are two medical schools, at Howard and Meharry, and two dental schools, also at these institutions. There are law schools at Howard, Southern, Texas Southern and North Carolina Central Universities.

The accomplishments of the black colleges have been considerable. For many years they provided virtually the only higher educational opportunity for Negroes, since nearly all blacks were in the South, and these were the only institutions open to them. As recently as 1947, between 80 and 90 percent of all blacks who had ever obtained degrees had earned them at Negro colleges. Among their approximately 400,000 alumni are some 80 percent of all black physicians and virtually all of the black dentists now practicing, three quarters of our black military officers, three quarters of the black scholars who have gone on to get their Ph.D.'s, and about 60 percent of high-level black Federal civil servants.

Of equal importance, the black colleges have turned out literally thousands of teachers—men and women who once taught black youth in segregated schools but are now teaching black and white children in integrated schools. Finally, the Negro colleges have reached out in the past, and continue to do so today, to a group of students that would otherwise be untouched by higher education. They have taken their students as they have found them, often badly prepared, and often from extremely humble homes, and have given them a chance in life. To do this they have had to offer a large amount of catch-up, or compensatory, education in addition to normal college work, and they have, on balance, done this well.

The Negro colleges have, of course, had their weaknesses in the past as well as their strengths and to a degree still have them today. Curricula have been narrow in many of the colleges, some of the teaching has been of low quality by poorly trained, uninspiring faculty, libraries have been generally poor, and sometimes laboratories as well. The atmosphere on some black campuses, moreover, has raised questions in the minds of some observers. Jencks and Riesman described the Negro college of the 1950's as having an "authoritarian atmosphere," with "intervening trustees," a "domineering but frightened president," and a faculty "tyrannized by the president and in turn tyrannizing the students."[12] Although the accuracy of this description has been vigorously challenged by leaders of the black colleges, there may, in some instances, have been an element of truth to it Certainly, some students have felt that their colleges were not sufficiently black-oriented, that the presidents were too beholden to the white establishment, and that students were treated as juveniles rather than as mature human beings. Not all black colleges,

[12]C. Jencks and D. Riesman, *The Academic Revolution* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc. 1968), p. 425.

it must be noted, have had these problems. Some are generally acknowledged to be excellent institutions, and many campuses have been stable. Moreover, the weaknesses and problems found at some of the colleges are understandable. Virtually all of these faults can be traced to a long history of inadequate funding and the disastrous legacy of segregation.

Looking to the future, one must acknowledge that the Negro colleges, despite the new recognition that they are a national asset, face a hard road. The private colleges will need substantial increases in income even to stand still, as costs continue to mount through inflation. Furthermore, faculty salaries are low by national standards and will have to be raised, or the colleges will continue to lose faculty to white institutions, which are under heavy pressure from the Federal Government to integrate in accordance with the requirements of civil rights legislation. Where the funds for these raises are to come from is by no means clear. Substantial increases in tuition and fees are out of the question unless the colleges are to turn their backs on the children of poor black families, service to whom is one of their single strongest justifications for continued existence. Although state funding of the public Negro colleges is generally, on a per-student basis, the same today as funding of white colleges, the black institutions have a backlog of needs resulting from earlier discriminatory financing. If the Southern and border states do put large amounts of catch-up money into their Negro colleges, however, the pressure in state legislatures to turn them into predominantly white institutions and divert them from their historic mission of serving the needs of blacks will certainly grow. In both the private and the public black colleges, there will be a massive need for student aid funds if these colleges, as they now do, continue to draw their students from a constituency with a median family income about a third below the national median for higher education at large.

On the curricular front there will be much to be done if the black colleges are to meet the needs of their students as fully as they should. While the heavy emphasis which most of them place on liberal arts subjects and teacher training was vitally important at an earlier period in creating the black elite which gave leadership to the black community, an additional need today is for blacks to become trained in a wide range of fields where today there are opportunities for them but which formerly, because of segregation, were closed to them. These include business, engineering, accountancy, the law, the health professions, economics, a variety of technical areas, and so on. In addition, the black colleges have a special and very important role to play in teaching and research related to the black community's experience in our national life—such areas as its origins in Africa, its history in the Americas, its particular history as part of the development of the United States, the rural and the urban black, Afro-

American art and music, the linguistics of Negro speech, the black psychology, the sociology of the black family, and so on. Finally, there is a need for the black colleges to do far more than they have been able to do in the past in the area of adult education, particularly where these colleges are located in the centers of large concentrations of black population, as many are.

It seems obvious that to accomplish all of this the black colleges are going to have to receive considerable help from the Federal Government, from the states, from business concerns and from foundations. Traditionally, in the United States, the financial support of higher education has been almost entirely a responsibility of the states and of private sources of funds. However, about 15 years ago, after the Russians launched sputnik, the Federal Government began to make increasing funds available to colleges and universities, and by 1972 this aid had become substantial. Up until about 1960 the black colleges, except for Howard University, got virtually no Federal aid at all. By 1970, however, they were, according to the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, receiving about $125 million annually from Washington. The figure of $125 million, again according to the Department, represented 3.2 percent of all Federal aid to higher education for that year, whereas the black colleges enrolled only 2.06 percent of all students.

Relationships between the black colleges and the Federal Government have, at best, been strained in recent years. On the Administration's side, the figures I have just given are quoted with pride, and top officials have made a number of public statements about the importance of the black colleges. The black colleges, on the other hand, point out that relating the proportion of Federal support to present student enrollment is a meaningless indicator which takes no cognizance of such critical factors as the colleges' huge backlog of accumulated needs resulting from past discrimination, their need to raise salaries, and their need to develop new curricula. They also point out that there are some important kinds of Federal support, such as that for scientific research, of which they get only the most minute share. Their belief is that Federal aid, to meet their real needs and match the rhetoric of Administrative officials, should rise to a very much higher level than the approximately $200 million envisaged for 1973. Prospects for help of this kind from Washington are, however, far from bright at the present time.

Although there were occasional grants by foundations in the years from 1945 to the early 1960's, mainly through a central fund-raising organization called the United Negro College Fund which serves 40 of the stronger private colleges, it has only been in the last decade that foundation aid has been significant enough to create what might be called the second phase of philanthropic support for black higher education. According to

figures presently available, which are the best we have but which may be as much as 25 percent on the low side, foundation aid for this purpose mounted from about $1 million in 1962 to a high of about $23 million in 1966 and has leveled off since then to an annual total of about $19 million. The 10-year total 1962-71, was about $132 million, about 90 percent of which went to support the higher education of blacks in black institutions and 10 percent to higher education of blacks in white institutions. These figures, however, run only through 1971 and therefore do not reflect a new Ford Foundation program under which some $50 million is to be given over a five-year period in the form of major grants to selected private Negro colleges and $50 million more for a fellowship program.

In addition to general budgetary support for the Negro colleges, foundation grants have been given for a variety of purposes, including faculty training, curriculum development, new facilities and equipment, and research. Carnegie Corporation, rather than making grants to individual colleges, has tended to support centralized, cooperative ventures designed to benefit a number of institutions simultaneously. As with aid from the Federal Government, many blacks have felt that foundation support for the higher education of blacks, which over recent years has aggregated about 5 percent of total foundation giving to higher education, has been inadequate. There seems to be a good deal of justice in this claim.

Taking a somewhat longer look into the future, it is hard to do more than speculate about what will become of the colleges founded specially for Negroes. Some of the weaker private institutions may, I believe, fail in the coming years, as they increasingly feel the competition of public higher education in the Southern and border states. They may simply not be viable entities. There is, of course, a long history of the failure for financial reasons of private Negro colleges, but in earlier years new ones kept springing up to take their places. That probably will not happen in the future, at least not in the South, although it is interesting to note that several new private black colleges created through black initiative, have recently appeared in urban centers outside the South, for example, Nairobi College in East Palo Alto, California.

Many of the stronger private Negro colleges may, I believe, be able to attract the support needed to survive and may indeed even prosper as largely—though not entirely—black institutions. As part of the essential diversity which private colleges and universities provide to American higher education, they should be no greater anomalies in a society where segregation is legally outlawed than our many private sectarian colleges are in a society where the church is kept strictly out of the affairs of the state. If no students are *made* to go to black colleges or *barred* from them because of race, no harm, and probably much good, will come from their existence.

The future of the public black colleges is, if anything, even less clear

today than that of the private colleges. One result of the state plans for dismantling dual black and white systems required by the recent Pratt decision in the *Adams* v. *Richardson* case, to which I have referred, could be the total disappearance of these institutions. They could simply be closed up and their students scattered among predominantly white institutions, they could be so transformed as to cause any recognizable black identity to be lost, or they could be absorbed into white institutions.

Fearing the destruction of public black colleges and the end of their special services to the black community, the Legal Defense Fund is pursuing a strategy of suits aimed at making the states establish their Negro colleges as "primary" institutions in the geographical areas where they are located. Thus, states would not be permitted to close these colleges up completely, transform their character, merge them into white institutions, or establish rival white institutions close by. They would, on the other hand, be required to upgrade the quality of the black colleges, which would serve to integrate them—integrate them to a point where the requirements of dismantling the dual systems had been met but not so far that the black administration and faculty members now staffing the colleges lose their positions or that academic standards or tuition charges are imposed which effectively bar the kinds of black students the colleges presently serve.

Clearly, this will be a difficult line to pursue in the courts, and will be much affected by the special circumstances of particular areas. Nevertheless, a favorable decision in the *Norris* case in Virginia in 1971 regarding the future of Virginia State College, a black institution, has established a useful precedent for pursuit of this strategy. If the strategy does work, as one hopes it will, the principle will have been established that the constitutional requirements of desegregation can be as readily met by the integration of black institutions with a proportion of whites as vice versa. This seems a perfectly logical position to me, although it is not one, I believe, likely to appeal to many white state legislators or white parents.

To a greater and greater degree the idea is being accepted of having black students and even some black faculty in once all-white universities. But a situation in which white students are virtually compelled, because of their need to attend institutions located near their homes, to enroll in black administered and staffed colleges, will come very much harder both for white legislators and white parents.

A final, and all-important, question is the one of what view blacks themselves will have about the future of the Negro colleges, especially beyond the day when it can be persuasively argued that they are providing opportunity for impoverished Southern black students who, for reasons of poor educational preparation or finance, cannot attend other institutions. In the early 1960's, several of the black colleges served as the base from which black students launched their courageous campaign of sit-ins

against segregated lunch counters and other facilities. These sit-ins, though controversial on some black campuses, were one of the key elements in the subsequent passage of civil rights legislation by the Congress of the United States.

More recently a controversy has developed among blacks which, at least on one side, seems to be ideological, as to what the purpose of the black colleges should be. While fewer and fewer black people would defend the traditional character of these institutions in its entirety, most blacks do, nonetheless, continue to see them as essentially educational institutions preparing young people for leadership roles in an integrated society. There is a group of blacks, however, which includes some younger faculty members and some students, that is concerned primarily with the quasi-political role of the black college. This group is interested in the concept of the "black university," an institution run exclusively by blacks, exclusively for blacks, and serving as a center for the stimulation of black consciousness, and even as a base for black power.

What the ultimate resolution of this issue will be is by no means clear. It will, however, be much influenced by what happens in white America. If white prejudice, despite its continued existence today, continues to decline in the future, I do not believe a militant, quasi-political role for the black colleges will gain much support from blacks. If white prejudice should increase, however, and the nation begin to take serious steps back toward the presently discredited course of segregation, then the political role of the black colleges will certainly grow. I would myself predict that it is the educational role of these colleges, reinforced by their special mission to study, define and help gain respect for the black experience in American life, that will commend them to blacks and sustain them in the future. I very much hope this will be the case.

Blacks in White Institutions

Although the numbers of black students attending the traditional Negro colleges has continued to grow steadily in recent years, the great burgeoning of black participation in higher education is largely the result of a dramatic increase in black enrollment in what were formerly all-white or virtually all-white institutions. As late as 1938, some 97 percent of all black students were in the Negro colleges. By 1954, however, at least 40 percent of black students were in predominantly white institutions, mainly in the North and West, and by 1970 over half, some 56 percent, were in these colleges and universities. Including part-time as well as full-time students, this figure was 72 percent.

I have discussed some of the obvious reasons for this rapid growth in

what might be called the white sector of black higher education—constitutional and legislative reasons in particular. Another reason is associated with changes in prevailing attitudes on the white American campus in the latter half of the 1960's. Until that time the racial issue had barely intruded on the typical white campus of the North or the West. However, in the mid-1960's there were extensive riots in the black slums of a number of cities, which stirred the consciences of liberal Americans deeply, especially at the universities and colleges. On top of this, in 1968, came the shocking assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. At the same time, growing hostility to the Vietnam War began to spread through American society, and this was particularly strong in the universities. These and other factors resulted in the rapid politicization of many campuses and an outbreak of student disturbances. It was a period characterized by active criticism on the campus of all the ills of American life, amongst them the evil of white racism. Looking inward at the university, however, those who made up the academic community suddenly realized that their own house was not in order. There were few black students and even fewer black faculty members and administrators. The reaction was a great spasm of conscience which ran through the academic world and a new commitment to right the errors of the past.

This, however, proved to be far more difficult than was at first supposed. Although black students had previously attended these institutions, they were largely of middle-class origin and had lived in integrated communities. The colleges and universities discovered that they had no real contact with the great mass of black people, living under *de facto* segregated conditions in the great cities or in poverty stricken rural areas. Their admissions systems, they realized to their chagrin, were entirely geared to white, middle-class, largely suburban America. Consequently, new means had to be developed to recruit black students in quantity, especially to reach out to those who lived in the inner-city and the rural slums, where they experienced inferior segregated elementary and secondary schooling.

Beyond this, however, several formidable obstacles that had traditionally impeded the entry of blacks into higher education had to be faced. The first of these, of course, was simply money. Economic status always has been, and still is, a prime determinant of who will attend college. In 1968, according to census data, the median income of white families in the United States was $8,937 and of black families was $5,590, or about 63 percent of the figure for whites. In that year about 50 percent of all American college and university students came from families in the highest income quartile and only about 7 percent from the lowest quartile, where, incidentally, 45 percent of black families then found themselves, though the situation is now improving. The colleges discovered, therefore, that to

enroll black students they would have to provide generous scholarship assistance, and most made great efforts to do so, diverting funds from other uses and sometimes from less impoverished, but nonetheless still needy, white students. Funds were also given by foundations, business firms and individual donors to help the colleges and universities provide scholarship aid to blacks. Government scholarship and student loan programs were of some assistance, also, to needy students but less so in the case of most blacks because of the great degree of their need. It is to be hoped that a newly enacted federal assistance program for low-income students, called Basic Opportunity Grants (with the unfortunate acronym of BOGS) will be of more real help to black students from very poor families. Family income will, however, continue to be important in determining how many blacks enter higher education.

A second obstacle was the obvious one of the poor academic preparation which most black children had received either in segregated school systems or in poor quality schools located in inner-city slums. Just *how* bad these institutions were came as a shock to many privileged Americans when it began to be realized in the 1960's, and efforts were made, unfortunately on the whole quite ineffective, to improve the schools.

As a consequence of poor schooling, compounded by home environments that often provided little conventional academic stimulation, black youngsters, as a group, have always scored lower than have whites, as a group, in the standardized aptitude and achievement tests which substantial numbers of colleges and universities have used in their admissions procedures. There has also been the problem that the tests themselves reflected a cultural norm in American life based almost exclusively on white, middle-class experience and values, and while the tests were reasonably accurate as predictors of success in higher educational institutions which also reflected that norm, they had obvious limitations in a society rapidly becoming more pluralistic in its standards.

Increasingly, therefore, admissions officers sought alternate ways to measure the capacity of blacks and others handicapped by poor academic preparation or by lack of the kinds of stimulation provided by a conventional middle class background, to succeed in higher education. This identification effort proved to be a much more difficult task than the former reliance on traditional measures and qualifications for higher education.

By no means all of the initiative for the rapid increase in black student enrollment came from the white colleges and universities. Considerable impetus came from the black community itself for admission to publicly supported institutions of higher education. The most publicized and perhaps most interesting case arose in New York City. The City University of New York is a large, tuition-free institution operated by the City with a mixture of state and city funds. Prior to 1970 any student who had gained a

diploma from a New York City high school with a certain average and class standing and scored well on standardized tests was automatically admitted to the University. While this seemed democratic enough, it in fact resulted in the almost total exclusion of blacks and of the other large New York minority, Puerto Ricans, whose high school records and test scores did not meet the required standard for entrance to the University.

This in turn reflected, or was felt to reflect, the poor education available to minority students in the *de facto* segregated schools they had attended in Harlem, the South Bronx, Bedford-Stuyvesant and other so-called "ghetto" areas. The result was a deep feeling of anger that poor people and minorites were being forced to help support with their taxes an institution which almost exclusively served middle-class whites, and this quickly became a politically explosive issue. A decision was made, therefore, to institute a policy of "open admissions" to the University. Any student with a high school diploma, no matter what his or her record, would be automatically admitted.

Contrary to the fears of some, this decision did not result in a tidal wave of poorly qualified new students submerging the University. It did, however, result in the admission of several thousand new black and Puerto Rican students, and even more white students of working-class background, many of whom were also poorly prepared academically. This necessitated the establishment of a substantial compensatory education program by the University, which it undertook with energy, goodwill and some success. On balance, open admissions at the City University has not proven to be the disaster many people predicted; nor has it been an unqualified success. At the least, however, it eased the City of New York past one of its uglier racial confrontations of recent years and has given a chance to some minority students who would have had no other opportunity and who have taken good advantage of it.

A number of American state universities have, of course, by law, always maintained an open door policy for any graduate of a high school in the state. This, however, was in effect a revolving door policy because large numbers flunked out in the first year. The open admission experiments, in New York City and elsewhere, were different in that they made a real effort to make up for the poor preparation of the new type of student through compensatory programs. These experiments have, however, in most instances, proven to be controversial. The ostensible nature of the issue is educational—whether higher education can take on the responsibility of trying to make good the deficiencies of lower levels of education for substantial groups of young people who tend to be poor, to be of minority origin, and to have been obliged by *de facto* segregated residential patterns to attend poor-quality, segregated schools without doing harm to its central purposes. The real nature of the issue, however, is probably political and

has to do with opposition by some whites who resent blacks and other members of minority groups toward which they feel superior getting what they regard as favored treatment—this despite the fact, as I have said, that more whites have benefited from open admissions than members of any other group.

The true political nature of the issue was well illustrated when Vice-President Agnew felt constrained in a speech in 1970 to attack open admissions in these words: "Any attempt to subordinate the great universities to social goals for which they are ill-designed can only result in tragic losses to both those institutions and the nation."[13] This was music to the ears of some Americans who normally would shed few tears over the fate of the universities.

Despite these obstacles to the entry of blacks into predominantly white higher education, their enrollment there has, nonetheless, climbed rapidly in recent years, to a point where, according to recently released Labor Department statistics, almost the same proportion of blacks as whites completing high school in June 1972 entered college in September of that year—47.6 percent for blacks and 49.4 percent for whites. This virtual parity, always remembering, of course, that fewer blacks than whites reach high school leaving level, was achieved by a substantial increase in the proportion of black high school graduates who decided to go on to higher education and an unexpected decline in the proportion of whites.

Nevertheless, admissions officers in leading four year institutions have recently warned of a declining commitment on many predominantly white campuses to enroll black students, especially where this means giving financial aid to them at the expense of white students. This suggests that blacks may increasingly be obliged to attend lower quality, moderate-cost four-year colleges or more probably, low-cost two-year community or junior colleges, where some 40 percent of blacks are already estimated to be enrolled. The latter is a prospect that fills many black leaders with apprehension. While they recognize that community college programs are well suited to some of their young people, they fear that if financial or other circumstances force too many of them to go to these institutions, blacks will fail to get a fair share of high-level training and hence, high-level executive and professional jobs in later employment.

As the numbers of blacks in essentially white colleges and universities began to mount in the late 1960's, it became apparent that there were severe problems of adjustment involved on both sides. The prevailing expectation of white administrators and faculty was that the new black students would simply conform to the mores, standards and outlook of the majority white culture on campus, much as the few middle-class black students had done

[13]Vice-President Spiro Agnew, as quoted in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, iv, 28 (April 20, 1970), pp. 1-2.

in the past. This, however, was not to be the case. The new students, fresh from the ghettos, felt strange, lonely, unwanted, and fearful in what they saw as an alien and even hostile white world. They withdrew from social contact with whites and sought only the company of other blacks. They first requested, and then began to demand, separate residential and dining facilities and social clubs, and after many institutions granted them such concessions, either voluntarily or under duress, would not allow whites on their "turf," as the expression went. In some cases a kind of paranoia set in which even caused black students to arm themselves, resulting in police action on some campuses, much unfavorable publicity and a high state of tension.

On the white side, some students unquestionably were hostile to blacks and showed it, but others simply felt rather hurt and puzzled by the black attitude, as did administrators and faculty. Only slowly did it begin to dawn on whites that their assumption that blacks should and would conform automatically to the majority culture of the campus required re-examination. Perhaps, they began to realize, the majority culture itself had to make some moves in the direction of the minority culture, if a harmonious relationship was to be established. This would entail the hiring of some black administrative staff and faculty members, an attempt to eliminate all forms of racism on the campus, unconscious as well as conscious, and, finally, changes in the curriculum which would recognize the validity of the black culture and the black experience in American life. In differing ways and to varying degrees these steps began to be taken on many campuses, and tension gradually began to subside.

A principal request, or in some cases demand, made by black students on many campuses was the establishment of an institute, or a program, of black, or Afro-American studies, and today there are some 200 of these enterprises in existence. In another 400 institutions or so, there are courses in black studies within traditional academic departments. To say the least, black studies has been a controversial subject in American academic life—both among whites and blacks. Some whites have argued that black studies is a disgraceful academic fraud, devoid of any real intellectual content—nothing in fact but a sellout to militant black students to keep them from causing trouble on the campus. Other whites have argued that the traditional curriculum has, indeed, been ethnocentric and unconsciously racist and that black studies, if well taught and well organized, has a legitimate place on the campus, as legitimate as Japanese studies, Russian studies, Latin American studies, and certainly African studies. The black American experience, they believe, is a significant part of the total American experience and has been sadly neglected, leading to severe distortions in the teaching of American history that have harmfully influenced the racial attitudes of generations of American young people.

Among blacks, black studies has been even more controversial. As one writer has put it, "Many blacks argue that black studies must be a training ground for black liberation. Classes, therefore, would be forums for political indoctrination and the training of revolutionary cadres to organize the black masses. Black studies must help to mold the oppressed in the Third World into a solid revolutionary phalanx to end white supremacy and white exploitation."[14] Blacks of this outlook see black studies entirely in ideological terms, a base from which to prosecute the ideal of black regeneration through black withdrawal from white society. For this reason white students, they believe, have no place in black studies programs and must be excluded from them. Black students, they say, have no time to waste trying to assuage the guilt complexes of the kinds of liberal white students who enter black studies programs.

Other blacks, while conceding that black studies properly taught can have value to whites in broadening their perspective and teaching them something of the black experience, are scornful of black studies as a pursuit for black students. They regard such studies as a deadend and waste of time for blacks, in fact defrauding them of the higher educational experience they have so painfully aspired to and at last gained. Blacks of this outlook, among whom are such eminent leaders as the international economist, Professor W. Arthur Lewis of Princeton University, Clifton R. Wharton Jr., President of Michigan State University, one of America's major predominantly white universities, and Andrew Brimmer, a Governor of the Federal Reserve Board, advocate instead that black students study such subjects as science, mathematics, engineering, economics, business, law, medicine, and so on. The future for the black community in America, they believe, lies in the maximum development of black intellectual power aimed at future competition of black graduates with whites for those high-level economic, professional, political and administrative positions in the nation where the leverage is greatest to build a better life for blacks within a better society for all Americans.

Some of the sharpest controversy in regard to black studies seems to have abated a bit in the past year, however, and there is reason to believe that the future will be less controversial still. Certainly, some of the ideological fervor connected with the field has died down, and some of the worst mistakes made in launching programs so hastily have been rectified. Meanwhile, among black students, there has been a growing awareness that spending too much of their time on black studies will severely limit their chances of getting a good job after graduation, while among many whites

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[14]John W. Blassingame (Ed.), *New Perspectives on Black Studies* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1971), p. xvi. The reader should note that Blassingame is describing a position which he does not hold.

there is increased understanding that black studies taught by trained scholars is an entirely proper academic pursuit.

The chief problem from the outset, however, and one that still remains, is the severe shortage of qualified scholars, especially black scholars, able to teach, do research and publish scholarly works in this field. This shortage is, of course, symptomatic of the general dearth of blacks with graduate training to fill teaching, research and administrative posts in higher education at large. And this, in turn, is indicative of a general shortage of highly trained blacks for the professions, such as medicine and law, and for upper-level posts in banking, commerce, industry, engineering, government service and other important areas. Increasing the numbers of blacks in graduate schools of arts and sciences and in the graduate professional schools of medicine, law, engineering, business, architecture, and so on must, therefore, continue to receive high priority.

An Appraisal

Any final, overall appraisal of American experience with the higher education of blacks is, of course, impossible at this stage because their large-scale participation in it is such a recent phenomenon. A few general conclusions can, however, be stated with some certainty and other conclusions advanced more speculatively and tentatively.

On the negative side, from the point of view of blacks, a strong indictment is certainly in order. It is a sad fact that in the more than three hundred years of its history, American higher education, with the exception, of course, of the special colleges for Negroes, showed little evidence, until relatively recently, of any sense of responsibility for the education of blacks. Our colleges and universities were, on the whole, no better than handmaidens of a system which first enslaved and then systematically oppressed black people. It would be hard to demonstrate that these institutions at large were ever demonstrably in advance of general public opinion in taking steps to right the great historical wrong done to blacks, or in understanding that the American nation could never be true to its declared ideals, and therefore never have full integrity, until equality was a fact for all Americans—black as well as white.

Secondly, from the black point of view, it could hardly be claimed that higher education, for all it has done in recent years to make up for its earlier failures, has as yet achieved a state of real integration. Granted that such a goal may not be fully attainable without the assistance of many other agencies in society, higher education could, nonetheless, probably have gone much further on its own toward reaching the goal than it has. The admission of black students, even in sizeable numbers, does not in itself satisfy the demands of integration. It is only a start. What the term implies ultimately is a meaningful sharing of power and position in the governance, administration and academic staffing of higher education, especially as this affects the lives of blacks themselves.

The central question, as blacks would put it, is how the black minority is to exercise effective influence over its own fate and gain full respect for its own special experience within a higher educational system controlled by the white majority. That question, many blacks would say, has hardly begun to be answered.

It is my belief that both parts of this indictment are essentially valid. It is true that over most of our history higher education failed the black man miserably. It is also true that higher education has a long way still to go in

arriving at a concept of integration well beyond our previous understanding of that term. Nothing can now be done about the former; it is history. As to the latter, much can be done, but it will be difficult going in largely uncharted terrain.

It is surprising, considering the very long span of the world's history and the prevalence of pluralistic societies, how little is known about the ways minority and majority communities can live together harmoniously and with respect for the autonomy of each other's cultures within the requirements imposed by the maintenance of viable nation states. Now that the United States has rejected oppression as a solution to this problem and is also beginning to reject an assumption of automatic conformity by minorities to the majority culture as the price of equality, the search for this knowledge will, I believe, be one of our major preoccupations for the balance of this century, not only in regard to blacks but with respect to other minorities as well.

As this search goes forward, our colleges and universities will be among the first institutions in the society to be involved. Indeed, many of them are already deeply involved because the presence of substantial numbers of black students is having a profound effect on many campuses, and as real integration, in the terms I have just described it, progresses, the impact will be even greater. There are those, of course, who are fearful of any black impact on our universities, who would prefer to see all of the change in this confrontation of white university and black student take place on the black side. There are many others, however, among whom I count myself, who believe that the black impact will be beneficial, and that as a result of it our colleges and universities will be more humane institutions better able to contribute to the building of a more humane society.

Granting, then, the essential validity of the black indictment of higher education, there are, nonetheless, some positive things one can say about what it has done for blacks in American life. There can, for example, be little doubt that it has been largely responsible for the development of a black elite that has provided leadership to the black community and is beginning to claim some share of the leadership of our national life generally. This elite is growing rapidly today and is starting to penetrate virtually every aspect of the society, including government service at the Federal, state and local levels, commerce, industry and banking, the professions, communications, education, the arts and politics. In the South alone there are now 1,144 black elected officials, including two members of the United States Congress. It is true that we are probably a long way from seeing a black president of General Motors or of the Chase Manhattan Bank, but blacks now sit on the boards of directors of both of these corporations and on many other corporate boards. In some instances the high position

occupied by blacks is little more than tokenism, but many institutions have moved on well beyond that. There is no reason to suppose that substance rather than show in the integration of the American leadership class will not continue to grow.

It is to be hoped, and, I think, expected, that some part of the expanding black elite will devote its full energies to leadership of the mass of black people, many of whom continue to lag behind the population at large economically, in the quality of their education and health care, and in their standard of housing. Whether to devote their talents specifically to serving other blacks or to take leadership positions in the general society will be a dilemma black graduates will continue to face for a long time to come.

Secondly, it is clear now that higher education for blacks, especially in the Negro colleges, did play an important part in the civil rights movement. Not only were many civil rights leaders, such at Martin Luther King, graduates of these institutions, but in many cases it was students from them who courageously challenged injustices entrenched in the laws supporting segregation.

When one looks at the question of the economic returns of higher education to blacks, such research as is available offers contradictory evidence. There is no dispute over the fact that blacks who have had higher education earn more money than blacks who have not. The dispute is over the question of how well blacks do in relation to whites. One study published in 1970 which analyzed census data concluded that, while it was true for both blacks and whites that the farther up the higher educational ladder they went the more money they earned, still the difference at each degree level between average white and average black yearly earnings amounted to $2,400 or more per year. This difference remained constant even after accounting for the quality of the institution attended, age, field of specialization, and the level of the degree.[15] Other studies have tended to produce the same findings.

A more recent study, however, by Professor Herbert Katzenstein, suggets a different conclusion. Comparing the average earnings, 1962-70, of black graduates of City College, a part of the City University of New York, and of Howard University, the large Negro institution in Washington, D.C., with the average earnings of comparable white graduates of City College, he found that, while it was true that the black graduates of 1962 earned less than whites, those of 1970 were actually earning more, indeed, from $1,600 to $2,000 more.[16] Although it is doubtful such a finding would emerge from

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[15]Ritchie H. Reed and Herman P. Miller, "Some Determinants of the Variation and Earnings for College Men," *Human Resources*, V, 2 (Spring 1970), pp. 177-190.

[16]Herbert Katzenstein, "New Gains for the Black Graduate," *The City College Alumnus* (December, 1972), pp. 1-4.

a national study of all black and white graduates, it is, nonetheless, interesting, suggesting that the demand for black graduates is exceeding the supply in some situations and forcing the market price up. This hypothesis is supported by information I have received informally from some employers. I would guess that the situation in which black graduates are paid a premium will become more general before supply catches up with demand and ends the practice. Over the longer run, it is reasonable to suppose that the salaries paid to black and white graduates will be very much the same where they have comparable qualifications.

Not much is known about what might be called the sociological and psychological effects of higher education specifically on black students. The research that has been done on the impact of college on students has been almost exclusively concerned with white students. This research shows that as students move upward from their freshman to their senior year their value orientations seem to change. They become, on the one hand, less authoritarian, less dogmatic, less prejudiced and less conservative in their attitudes toward public issues. On the other hand, they become more independent, more self-confident, readier to assert ideas, and more receptive to social and technological change. It seems reasonable to me to suppose that these same changes in value orientations would be true of black students, with perhaps one exception. I would guess that on the subject of racial prejudice higher education would make blacks somewhat ambivalent—both more and less hostile to whites. Their greater sense of self-worth would naturally make them less tolerant of white racism, white paternalism, and white ethnocentrism and less inclined to acquiesce in the injustices these faults produce. On the other hand, their increased maturity and wider knowledge of the history of man would perhaps lead them to see white racism in America in perspective as simply one more ugly manifestation of that age-old weakness of mankind generally that has led countless groups of people in all parts of the world and in all civilizations to create protective barriers between themselves and other peoples as a means of enhancing their perception of their own worth and importance.

Turning now to the question of what the higher education of blacks has done for the nation at large, we can say with certainty that it has identified, trained, and made productive significant human talent that might otherwise have been lost, and has directed this talent toward service to the welfare of all Americans. The value of this function becomes ever more apparent as more and more blacks take their places in the leadership stratum of our national life. No nation is so rich in human resources that it can afford to suppress any part of the talent available to it because of artificial restrictions deriving from race, religion, sex, language or culture. High ability is too widely and too randomly distributed in mankind to suppose that any single division of the human race has some sort of

monopoly on it. It lies everywhere and it must be sought everywhere.

Perhaps the most difficult question to assess is that of the effect of black higher education on the racial attitudes of whites. No doubt some whites who have had no higher education have been deeply resentful at seeing increasing numbers of blacks enjoy an opportunity they feel they themselves, and perhaps their children too, have been denied. There seems to be a considerable amount of this kind of resentment around today. It has to some degree been both stimulated, and catered to, by politicians for their own purposes.

On the other hand, there is also no question that most Americans, like people nearly everywhere, are impressed by obvious success. Seeing increasing numbers of blacks in important, responsible positions, positions they have gained by virtue of their higher education, rather than seeing them only in menial positions, as was largely the case only a short time ago, probably increases the respect whites feel for blacks. One must certainly hope so.

As I look back over the history of the development of higher education for blacks in America, several impressions come strongly to mind. There is nothing extraordinary about these impressions, and they can be expressed quite simply. The first is my deep regret that the American society at large resisted so long and so adamantly the admission of blacks to higher education in substantial numbers. While the struggle of blacks to break through the barriers to higher education is an inspiring story, and one must admire those who succeeded against great odds, nonetheless anyone who looks at the matter dispassionately today must surely be painfully conscious of the vast unnecessary store of human misery and the great waste of human talent involved in that long denial of justice. Was anything constructive achieved by it? The answer is clearly no. We could just as well have got where we are today many decades ago, but we were too blind to do so.

My second impression is that of the substantial role played by the courts in the integration of higher education. It is true, of course, that it was the judiciary which in *Plessy v. Ferguson* created the great detour of "separate but equal" which threw America off course for so many long years. Nonetheless, in the past four decades the judiciary has more than redeemed itself. It might be said that in each instance the courts were merely reflecting public opinion, but in regard to the move toward integration I doubt that is true. Here, I believe, the courts were well ahead of public opinion and, indeed, helped lead it. This, of course, simply underscores the enormous importance in any society of having an independent judiciary which can rise above the short-sighted dictates of political partisanship and popular passion and respond not to what is expedient but to what is right.

A third and final impression is that, despite its extremely tardy de-

velopment and despite the many severe problems associated with it, problems one must not minimize, the extension of higher education to black Americans on what is approaching a massive scale is becoming a substantial success. It is accomplishing a great deal for blacks, and it is widely beneficial to the society at large. I am sure there will be moments of seeming national hesitation in the future and there will be no dearth of critics and carpers on the sidelines, but I am equally sure that the nation is now firmly and irrevocably committed to a policy of developing and using the talents of its black citizens and will never go back on this policy.

The relationship between the black and white races has been one of two or three of the most central issues in American life for at least a hundred years. It is a central issue today and will remain one for a long time to come. Constitutionally and officially, the nation is committed to a fully integrated society, and in many areas of its life, including higher education, that commitment enjoys wide public support. There are other areas, however, where public opinion is much more divided and where the path toward integration remains difficult and obscure. No one could predict just how rapidly further progress will be made toward full integration, although it is my conviction that, step by difficult step, that progress will be made. An unknown factor in the future will be the impact on the society of the hundreds of thousands of young black men and women who will be passing through our colleges and universities. In my view that impact will be a powerful one, and I have no reason to doubt that it will be directed constructively toward the building of a better nation—not just for blacks but for all Americans.

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